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ABSTRACT

In the context of linguistic theories of politeness, it is possible to consider the concept of a continuum of politeness that includes degrees of speaker egocentricity. It is proposed that directives in Brazilian Portuguese follow a hierarchy of politeness forms based on a theory of pragmatic markedness: that the more marked for politeness a directive form is, the more indirect it is in illocutionary force from the very direct base form. Degrees of politeness are related to a shift away from the speaker's egocentric focus, with the speaker relinquishing linguistic control and becoming increasingly dependent on the will of the hearer in complying with the request. The theory is illustrated with examples in Brazilian Portuguese of the use of the conditional tense and first- and second-person reference as strategies to express politeness. (MSE)

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Brazilian Portuguese Requests and the Role of Deixis in Politeness

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1. Introduction[1]

People communicate messages, attitudes, the status of their relationships, and other social dimensions through their verbal interaction with others. Another dimension which one may convey in the communication is that of politeness, which several linguists have attempted to define. R. Lakoff (1974), Fillmore (1975), and Brown and Levinson (1978) discuss an emotional element in politeness involving degrees of emotional distance. Brown and Levinson also consider a speaker's awareness of the hearer's 'face' or self-image and that of his or her own, and the desire to protect those self-images through various strategies. Fraser (1978) and Fraser and Nolen (1981) define politeness in terms of the rights and obligations which are negotiated in a 'conversational contract' between speaker and hearer, and adjustment and readjustment of the conversation to adapt to the ongoing perception of those rights and obligations. Focusing on the perception of the utterance by the hearer, Fraser says that politeness is 'an evaluation of how well the speaker has kept within the constraints of the existing conversational contract' (Fraser 1978:9-13). Another perspective to the question of politeness is presented in the analysis of R. Lakoff (1973:298), who posits three rules for politeness from the perspective of the

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speaker:

(a) Don't impose;

(b) Give options;

(c) Máke A feel good--be friendly.

According to Lakoff, the speaker can convey politeness in an utterance by following these rules, reflecting his or her attitudes towards the social context of the speech act. These attitudes include the speaker's relationship and feelings toward the hearer, the importance of the information to be conveyed and the formality of the act, and the effect the speaker wishes to achieve via the utterance (Lakoff 1973:293).

Considering these proposed properties of politeness, especially within the analyses of R. Lakoff (1973), Fraser (1976), and Fraser and Nolen (1981), we can approach the question of a continuum of degrees of politeness.[2] In Koike (1985), I propose a hierarchy of politeness forms of directives in Brazilian Portuguese, based on a theory of pragmatic markedness.[3] The more marked a directive form is for politeness, the more indirect it is in illocutionary force from the very direct base form.[4] For example, the base directive

(1) Senta aí. 'Sit there'

is much more direct and less polite than

(2) Poderia me fazer o favor de se sentar aí? 'Could you do me the favor of sitting there?'

based on Lakoff's rules. Examples (1) and (2) illustrate that the request form in (2) is a variant of the base directive in

(1), as proposed by Fraser (1976) and Haverkate (1979), but that the request in interrogative form is a more polite directive than the imperative. However, there are also degrees of politeness within directive categories; for example, within requests:[5]

(3) Eu quero um copo de água. 'I want a glass of water'

(4) Eu peço que você me dê um copo de água. 'I ask that you give me a glass of water'

(5) Você me dá um copo de água? 'Will you give me a glass of water?'

(6) Você pode me dar um copo de água? 'Can you give me a glass of water?'

(7) Você poderia me dar um copo de água? 'Could you give me a glass of water?'

Examples (3) through (7) suggest that degrees of politeness are related to a shift away from the speaker, i.e., away from an egocentric focus toward a greater distance from that center. In this way, the speaker is relinquishing linguistic control and is increasingly dependent on the will of the hearer in complying with the request.

Let us look more closely at this 'egocentric' focus. The three types of deixis according to Fillmore (1975)--<u>person</u> (e.g., you, me), <u>place</u> (e.g., here, there), and <u>time</u> (e.g., now, later)--are all oriented to the speaker's point of reference. In discussing deixis, Rauh (1983a) points out that the utterance, spoken from the speaker's point of view, contains the pragmatic information which the speaker wishes to convey. However, the center of orientation may be shifted in different ways to transmit certain meanings. It is this aspect of shifting the

focus from the deictic center in verb tense and person as strategies to convey degrees of politeness that I wish to explore in this paper. I will look specifically at the use of (a) the conditional tense and (b) first and second-person reference as strategies to express politeness in Brazilian Portuguese requests.

2. The Conditional Tense in Requests

In this section, I will show evidence to support Rauh's claim (1983b:229) that tenses, as deictic categories, do not designate strictly limited time intervals. That is, they can also be used in a pragmatic function to express politeness.

The future and conditional tenses, in their literal meanings, refer to events that take place at some point posterior to a specified point in time, such as the deictic center of 'coding time', or the moment of speaking (Fillmore 1975); e.g.,

(8) Você irá amanhã para a escola. 'You will go to school tomorrow' (action posterior to the present moment of speaking)

(9) Ele disse que veria a noiva dele no verão. 'He said that he would see his girlfriend in the summer' (action posterior to a past moment of speaking)

In an analysis of the Spanish tense system, Bull (1968) says that the conditional tense differs from the future in that it is a point in time posterior to a particular moment in a past axis, as in (9). I will assume that we can apply the same analysis to the Portuguese language, as shown in Figure 1.[6] However, we may note that in polite requests, as exemplified in (7), the conditional tense, which relates to the past axis, is oriented to

PRESENT AXIS

Anterior	Coding Time or Reference Point	Posterior
temos comido (+iter.or dur.)	comemos	comeremos
tenhamos comido (+iter.or dur.)	comamos	comermos

ANTICIPATED AXIS RELATED TO PRESENT

Anterior		Posterior
teremos comido tivermos comido	(no form)	(no form)

PAST AXIS

Anterior	Coding Time or Reference Point	Posterior
tínhamos comido	comíamos	comeriamos
tivéssemos comido	comemos	
comêramos	comêssemos	

ANTICIPATED AXIS RELATED TO PAST

Anterior		Posterior
teriamos comido	(no form)	(no form)

Figure 1: A modified version in Portuguese of Bull's (1968) analysis of the Spanish verb system

the present coding time. Thus, there is a disordering of tense and temporal setting.

Assuming that the content of a particular request cannot be construed as impolite and that the request is sincere, it appears that the conditional tense itself can be one of the strategies employed in a request to express politeness.[7] Compare the following examples:

(10) Poderia me dizer onde fica a igreja? 'Could you tell me where the church is?'

(10') Pode me dizer onde fica a igreja? 'Can you tell me where the church is?'

Using R. Lakoff's three rules of politeness as a base, it can be seen that both (10) and (10') do not impose, but both offer options to the hearer and are 'friendly'.

The conditional tense is a preferred verb form used in the expression of polite requests in languages such as English, Spanish (Rintell 1981; Fraser and Nolen 1981; Koike 1984a) and Portuguese (Koike 1985). Why is there a convention which recognizes the conditional tense as the more polite form in requests? Fraser and Nolen (1981:102) suggest that the conditional tense in Spanish conveys a certain tentativeness on the part of the speaker that the corresponding indicative form lacks.[8] However, this explanation seems vague for both Spanish and Portuguese and does not account for the illocutionary effects. I believe the answer may lie in the shift of focus away from the temporal deictic center, or from the egocentric orientation.

Figure 2 shows some requests based on the verb dar 'to give' in the three time frames of (a) present coding time, (b) time anterior to the coding time ('past'), and (c) time posterior to the coding time ('future'). The nature of requests implies that the action desired will take place either simultaneously to the coding time, or, more likely, posterior to it. Therefore, we can eliminate those utterances in the past time frame as ungrammatical or unable to express the notion of a request (examples 5a/b to 8a/b). For the same reason, the requests expressed in the past tense are unacceptable since they do not express the notion of a request in any of the three deictic settings (examples 2a/b/b', 6a/a'/b/b', 10a/b/b'), with one exception. The poder modal verb in the imperfect indicative tense can convey a request in the present and future time frames, as in (2a') and (10a'). However, I believe this is due not to the characteristics of the poder modal itself, but rather to the acceptance of the imperfect indicative verb form as a substitute for the longer conditional form poderia.[9]

We see, then, that requests are conveyed in the present and future time settings only through the present, future, and conditional tenses, with varying degrees of politeness. A preliminary and tentative hierarchy of such utterances is offered in Figure 3, based on my intuitions and confirmed by several Brazilian Portuguese native speakers.[10]

If the tentative hierarchy of politeness of the directives in Figure 3 is found to be largely acceptable, then perhaps the lesser degree of politeness expressed by the present tense forms of dar and poder (dá/pode) can be accounted for by relating them

Figure 2: Requests in Three Temporal Settings

Present time (agora 'now')

			conveyed meaning
1.	Present tense	(a) Pode me dar um livro?	Request
		(b) Me dá um livro?	Request
2.	Past tense	(a) Pôde me dar um livro?	Confirmation
		(a') Podia me dar um livro?	Request
		(b) Me deu um livro?	Confirmation
		(b') Me dava um livro?	Confirmation
3.	Future tense	(a) Poderá me dar um livro?	Request
		(b) Me dará um livro?	Request
4.	Conditional tense	(a) Poderia me dar um livro?	Request
		(b) Me daria um livro?	Request

Past time (ontem 'yesterday')

5.	Present tense	(a)*Pode me dar um livro?	--
		(b)*Me dá um livro?	--
6.	Past tense	(a) Pôde me dar um livro?	Confirmation
		(a') Podia me dar um livro?	Confirmation
		(b) Me deu um livro?	Confirmation
		(b') Me dava um livro?	Confirmation
7.	Future tense	(a)*Poderá me dar um livro?	--
		(b)*Me dará um livro?	--
8.	Conditional tense	(a)*Poderia me dar um livro	--
		(b) Me daria um livro?	Confirmation

Future time (amanhã 'tomorrow')

9.	Present tense	(a) Pode me dar um livro?	Request
		(b) Me dá um livro?	Request
10.	Past tense	(a)*Pôde me dar um livro?	--
		(a') Podia me dar um livro?	Request
		(b)*Me deu um livro?	--
		(b')*Me dava um livro?	--
11.	Future tense	(a) Poderá me dar um livro?	Request
		(b) Me dará um livro?	Request
12.	Conditional tense	(a) Poderia me dar um livro?	Request
		(b) Me daria um livro?	Request

Figure 3: Requests in interrogative form according to politeness

Least polite requests

Ex. in Fig. 2	
(3b, 11b)	Você me dará um livro (agora/amanhã)?
(1b, 9b)	Você me dá um livro?
(3a, 11a)	Poderá me dar um livro?
(1a, 9a)	Pode me dar um livro?
(4b, 12b)	Você me daria um livro?
(4a, 2a', 12a, 10a')	Poderia/Podia me dar um livro?

More polite requests

to the tense and axis diagram in Figure 1, and by referring to Huddleston's (1969) tense and deixis analysis for English. The present tense directly coincides with the deictic center of present coding time, thereby creating a more direct illocutionary force and a corresponding lesser quality of politeness. The future forms dará/poderá convey a more insistent and demanding tone, very likely due to the fact that, historically, the future tense was formed synthetically by the present tense of the modal haver and the infinitive, e.g.,

(11) Hei de cantar 'I have to (intend to) sing' → Cantarei. 'I shall sing'.

Aside from the fact that the semantic notion of the future form in Brazilian Portuguese expresses determination or intention, the present tense of haver again directly coincides with the deictic temporal center and thus conveys more illocutionary force, and, likewise, less politeness.[11] Therefore, the conditional tense, as shown in Figure 1, is the form farthest removed from the deictic center of orientation, and is the least imposing in force and the most polite. In other words, we might say that the less egocentric a request, the more politeness it can convey.

The modal poder, according to Pontes (1973:97), is a verb that can be interpreted in the three meanings of (a) to be able to V, (b) to have permission to V, and (c) to be possible to V. I assume that the third meaning is that expressed in the dar requests. Therefore, by shifting the request from asking the hearer to do the action to asking if it is possible for the hearer to do it, the force of the request is lessened. The

present tense form pode corresponds to the temporal deictic center and is therefore less polite than the conditional tense form poderia (I include podia as a variant of poderia). The conditional is the least imposing in force and most polite because, as stated earlier, it is the tense form farthest removed from the deictic center of orientation.

I have made an attempt to argue for varying degrees of politeness through the perspective of the relationship of verb tense to the temporal deictic center of the speaker. However, it is impossible to disregard the other elements in an utterance (e.g., lexical softeners, syntactic devices) which can add to or detract from the overall pragmatic effect of politeness of a particular request. One cannot make a one-to-one correspondence between, for example, use of the conditional tense and politeness in all cases.

Nevertheless, as partial evidence to support the scale of Figure 3 and the analysis of it, we can turn to the results of an empirical test performed by 45 native adult speakers of the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, all of whom had completed at least a high school education. These results are discussed at length in Koike (1985). In one section of this test, in which informants must communicate a particular directive to a non-intimate person of higher social rank and status than that of the informants, most respondents employ requests. Twelve of a total of 20 requests are expressed in either the conditional tense in questions (6 requests) or the declarative conditional/imperfect subjunctive structure (e.g., Eu pediria que o senhor se sentasse

ali. 'I would (like to) ask that you sit there') (6 requests).[12] Five of the 6 requests in interrogative form employ the poder modal in the conditional or the imperfect indicative tense forms.[13] 'I believe that the use of the future tense in requests in these data does not appear due to the insistent and demanding tone that it conveys. There is one exception, which involves the established expression of politeness será que, as in

(12) Será que você poderia/podia me dizer onde fica a igreja? 'Will it be (possible) that you could tell me where the church is?'

If the notion of possibility may be understood as underlying this expression in this context, then its conveyed meaning can soften the force of the future tense form será by giving control to the hearer in complying with the request and also by emphasizing that the speaker is subordinate to the hearer.[14]

Therefore, we have some empirical evidence which suggests that, in situations requiring formality and politeness, most informants choose to express their directives in request form in the conditional tense. Moreover, when the request is communicated in a question format, the poder modal is usually employed.

3. Politeness and 'Person' Deixis

Up to this point, my analysis has focused primarily on requests communicated in interrogative form. However, as suggested earlier in the results from the empirical test, requests in a formal setting are also expressed in the declarative conditional/imperfect subjunctive structure, as in

(13) Eu pediria que o senhor se sentasse ali. 'I would (like to) ask that you sit there'

The latter structure carries considerably more illocutionary force and, according to R. Lakoff's criteria, is less polite than requests in question format, as in

(14) Poderia se sentar ali? 'Could you sit there?'

since it is more imposing and offers less options. I think an explanation for this increased force can again be found in a shift away from the deictic orientation.

To illustrate my point, we can turn to the findings of another study. Fraser and Nolen (1981) found a tentative ranking of Spanish requests in order of more to less deference by 25 speakers of Spanish.[15] They also found that the ranking corresponded closely to another ranking done for English requests by 40 English speakers. Assuming that an approximate hierarchy is also valid in Brazilian Portuguese, as verified by several native informants, we may discuss the possible reasons for this hierachical ranking.[16] I have included a free translation in Portuguese of Fraser and Nolen's rankings for a range of Spanish requests in Figure 4.

First, utterances (a) through (c) can be eliminated, since they seem to be orders or assertions as opposed to requests. Utterance (i) can also be eliminated as being a suggestion rather than a request, according to the notion posited in Koike (1985) that orders, suggestions, and requests are distinct directive categories. The rest of the utterances may be divided into those which are (1) 'deictically centered' around the speaker's wants

Figure 4: A translation in Portuguese of Fraser and Nolen's (1981) ranking of sample requests

Least deferential

	a.	Faz/Faça isso.	orders/assertions
	b.	Você tem que fazer isso.	
	c.	Você precisa fazer isso.	
+	d.	Você não tem que fazer isso?	
+	e.	Eu devo pedir que você faça isso.	
+	f.	Por que você não faz isso?	
+	g.	Você não deveria fazer isso?	
Ø	h.	Você pode fazer isso?	
	i.	Eu sugiro que você faça isso.	> suggestion
+	j.	Gostaria que você fizesse isso.	
Ø	k.	Você se importaria de fazer isso?	
Ø	l.	Que tal você fazer isso?	
Ø	m.	Você poderia fazer isso?	
+	n.	Eu agradeceria se você fizesse isso.	

Most deferential

+ = 'deictically centered or based'
Ø = 'hearer based'

or perspective, and (2) those which are 'hearer-based', or in other words, those which convey that the hearer is in a higher linguistic position of power or control than the speaker and has more options with which to respond to the request.[17] We can tentatively and intuitively say that those requests which are 'deictically-centered' are examples (d) through (g), (j) and (n), while those which are 'hearer-based' are examples (h) and (k) through (m). The two examples that seem out of order are (j), which is deictically-centered but implies that the hearer is in a higher position of control to comply with the request, and (n), which technically is deictically-centered but is ranked as the most deferential of the group. However, the high ranking of (n) may be due to the particular highest verb of that utterance, which is agradecer 'to thank'. To thank someone implies that the speaker not only assumes a lower position of power or control with respect to the hearer, but also defers utmost respect to the hearer.

Thus, in a group of semantically related requests, it appears that the more deferential (and, I assume, more polite) requests are 'hearer-based', while the less deferential are 'deictically-centered.'[18] Although we are dealing here with personal rather than temporal deixis, these generalizations seem to support the overall suggestion made in this paper that the greater the distance from the deictic center, be it in temporal or personal dimensions, the greater the degree of politeness and the lesser the degree of illocutionary force.

However, if the declarative conditional/imperfect subjunctive structure is stronger in force and less polite than

the conditional tense in interrogative form, why do both appear with the same frequency in the empirical results from my study (Koike 1985)? In other words, what is the difference in conveyed meaning? For a possible answer to this question, I believe we can turn in part to Fraser and Nolen's (1981) distinction between deference and politeness, and to a syntactic explanation. According to Fraser and Nolen, who base themselves on Goffman (1971), "deference is the symbolic appreciation of the hearer by the speaker, while politeness is keeping within the rights and obligations expected of speaker and hearer during their interaction. If a speaker conveys an inappropriate level of deference, then he or she can be understood to be impolite. However, there may be times that the speaker, in desiring to show deference, may choose a strategy that is not necessarily the most polite. That is, to defer the most respect, the speaker may choose to remain distant and enter as little as possible into a 'conversational contract' with the hearer. We can assume, in this case, that the question of 'real world' rank and power may be a factor. For example, by using a question, the speaker comes directly in contact with the hearer and can expect direct interaction as a response to the question. On the other hand, by utilizing the declarative conditional/imperfect subjunctive structure, the speaker may make the request in more indirect terms so that the hearer does not have to reply directly to the speaker. For example, compare:

(15) Could Your Majesty sit here?

(16) I would like to ask Your Majesty to sit here.

In other words, given a certain level of non-intimacy between speaker and hearer, and a desire to maintain distance, the declarative structure with the performative verb expressed as in (16) could be less confrontative and show more deference since it does not expect a direct verbal reply, although it does seem less polite in terms of being imposing, offering less options, and conveying less friendliness.

4. Conclusion

The analysis discussed here suggests another perspective of the properties of politeness and how politeness can be conveyed, focusing on two of the many strategies--tense and person--which can help express politeness. We have taken Rauh's suggestion that shifting the deictic center of orientation may account for varying pragmatic effects such as the expression of degrees of politeness. If a scale of pragmatic force does exist in directives, as suggested in Koike (1985), then it may also apply within each category of directives (e.g., requests) to account for degrees of politeness, linked to the distance from the deictic center.

Notes

[1]I would like to thank Sylvio Brock, Dana Wheeler, and Donaldo Macedo for their support and suggestions in the writing of this paper. The empirical study from which this article was conceived was supported by a Faculty Development and Research Grant from North Carolina State University.

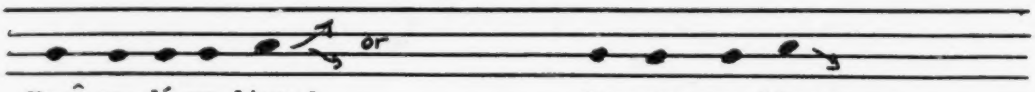
[2]Fraser (1978:13) believes that 'degrees of politeness' is a misuse of the term--that instead we should speak of degrees of deference. Following Goffman (1967), he defines deference as the 'degree to which the speaker symbolically appreciates the hearer', which differs from politeness. Fraser and Nolen (1981) state that if a speaker conveys an inappropriate level of deference, then he or she can be understood to be impolite. It appears, then, that according to Fraser, politeness is in part determined by deference, or that deference is a dimension of politeness. I believe that the two are usually not separated and that one can speak of degrees of politeness and deference at the same time. There are exceptions, however, which I will show later in this paper. Nevertheless, perhaps we should consider, instead of 'degrees of politeness', the notion of a continuum of politeness, as Fraser and Nolen also suggest.

[3]A 'directive' is 'the ways in which the speaker utilizes language to express the desire that the hearer act on his or her utterance' (Bach and Harnish, 1979:47).

[4]In using the term 'illocutionary force', I am referring to the work on speech acts done by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). The 'illocutionary force' of a speech act is determined by what the speaker intends the act to be; what is said, how it is

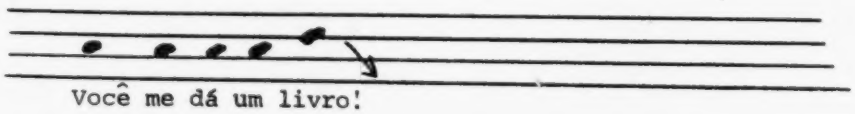
conveyed, and its situational context.

[5]I am basing my ideas about these requests on the assumption that all of them would be spoken with a neutral "request" intonation, i.e.,



Você me dá um livro? Eu quero um livro.

corresponding to a interrogative or declarative format, as opposed to the same statements issued, for example, with a very emphatic intonation, e.g.,



Você me dá um livro!

I would like to credit Milton Azevedo (p.c.) for suggesting this note to me.

[6]The Spanish and Portuguese languages appear to be largely the same with respect to their tense organization, with a few differences, so for purposes of this paper, we will assume that the theory proposed by Bull for Spanish tense organization also holds true for Portuguese. This assumption is supported by Konder (1983). I would like to thank Milton Azevedo for his suggestions in modifying my original organization of the Portuguese tense system to better accomodate the changes in meaning.

[7]Examples of utterances containing verbs in the conditional tense which are inherently rude due to semantic content are:

(i) Would you take that hamburger and shove it?

(ii) Would you get that ugly dog of yours out of here?

[8]Bull (1968:104) states that when an event is imperfect or not completed at the moment of speaking and the speaker uses the conditional form, its function is to avoid being dogmatic, categorical, or rude.

[9]The imperfect indicative form is only acceptable as a substitute for the conditional form for the verb <u>poder</u>. For example,

Me dava um livro agora? 'You were giving me a book now'

does not convey a request but rather a confirmation of a fact.

[10]I have linked the two time settings of present and future together since, as Huddleston (1969:795) suggests for English, the future and present axes do not differ in their effect on surface tense. In my opinion, this in turn suggests that the division between present and future is quite ambiguous, especially in Spanish and Portuguese. For example, the present tense in these languages can be used to subsume a present or a future action, as in

Eu te ligo. 'I (will) call you'

Depending on the reference of time setting and the contextual situation, this utterance can have either a future meaning (<u>Eu te ligo hoje a noite</u> 'I will call you tonight') or a present one (<u>Eu te ligo todos os dias</u>. 'I call you every day'). In addition, Huddleston discusses a present time, a deictic present, a present relative to the future axis, and a 'timeless' present, among other terms, which also apply to Portuguese in that 'present' is difficult to define. Thus, due to a fuzzy division between present and future, there is little difference in the expression

of requests in either time frame, since the request refers to some action which will supposedly take place at some ambiguous time posterior (or perhaps simultaneous) to the coding time.

[11]Huddleston treats the future form in English as comprised of a modal ('will/shall') in the higher VP and the verb itself which is in a lower VP. In his discussion of tense, he states that the highest VP in a sentence can never be 'future'; i.e., a future will always be in 'present' or in 'past' with few exceptions (1969:790). That analysis for English supports the one presented in this paper for Brazilian Portuguese.

[12]The other eight requests in the results were expressed as follows:

(a) Dá para ('Is it all right for you to') = 2

(b) Eu peço que ('I ask that') = 1

(c) Por favor/por gentileza, senta aqui ('Please sit here'--spoken in a beseeching as opposed to a commanding tone of voice) = 4

(d) Tenha a bondade de ('Have the goodness to') = 1

Dá para in (a) and ter a bondade in (d) represent frozen expressions of politeness. The requests in (c) could be considered as orders but the fact that they are accompanied by the frozen expressions por favor and por gentileza and spoken as requests shows that the speaker did not intend for them to be understood as imperatives.

[13]All of the informants who used the poder modal in their requests in this study were women. For more information on the differences in directives according to gender, see Koike

(1984b).

[14]By 'linguistic power or control', I am speaking of the power that one can assume linguistically in a communication situation without necessarily reflecting one's real world status or rank. For example, a boss may speak to his or her secretary in a very deferent and polite way in making a request, thus assuming a lower linguistic power position.

[15]See note 2 for the difference between 'politeness' and 'deference'.

[16]Most of the native Brazilian Portuguese informants who examined Figure 4 seemed to agree that (7) should be moved up between (9) and (10), and that (13) be moved back between (9) and (10). These changes, however, would not contradict the notions that I am proposing here.

[17]In reference to the two types of requests, Gordon and Lakoff (1971) also distinguish between two types of sincerity conditions in the category of requests: (1) speaker-based, in which the speaker is the subject or agent of the action (e.g., I want you to do this) and (2) hearer-based conditions, in which the hearer is the subject of the verb (e.g., Can you do that?).

[18]I wish to specify that one must evaluate the politeness in comparable sentences, since, for example, a difference in verbs may change the semantics and the politeness factor. Comparing

(i) Poderia ter um copo de água? 'Could I have a glass of water?'

(ii) Poderia me dar um copo de água? 'Could you give me a glass of water?'

we can see that (i) is more polite than (ii) since (ii) imposes

on the hearer to get the water, while (i) may be understood in certain contexts (a) to ask for permission to V or (b) to make a more implicit request that the hearer do this favor. The two possible meanings also weaken the illocutionary force. In asking for permission, the request is hearer-based, but it also implies that the speaker is in a far lesser position of control or power in real and linguistic terms. In implicitly requesting the favor, the request is essentially that of (ii) but is couched in much weaker terms since it is indirectly asking the hearer to perform the action.

Fraser (1978) attributes the greater deferentiality of 'Would you mind passing the salt?' over 'I would like the salt' from the fact that the first implies that the speaker owes the hearer deference, while the second makes the opposite claim. Moreover, he lists the following sentences:

'I hereby request that you fasten your seat belts

You are requested to fasten your seat belts

The pilot requests that you fasten your seat belts.

You are requested by the pilot to fasten your seat belts

You are kindly requested to fasten your seat belts

FAA regulations require that you fasten your seat belts

FAA regulations require that all passengers fasten their seat belts

All passengers are required by FAA regulations to fasten their seat belts' (Fraser 1978:16),

He finds that the increasing distance between the request and the speaker creates a sense of non-immediacy and lessens any

antagonistic feelings the hearer might feel towards the speaker. These comments suggest support for my analysis.

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